

**Abstract 255**

**TITLE:** Evaluation of Training Health Care Providers and Community Workers in the Use Of Behavioral Science for STD/HIV Prevention

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**BACKGROUND:** The purpose of the present study is to evaluate courses provided through a newly established Prevention Training Center (PTC) for Health Behavior Training (Part II) funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Rochester PTC provides training to prepare participants to deliver effective behavioral counseling for sexual and substance risk reduction within the context of clinic and community-based prevention interventions. The training is designed for those currently providing STD/HIV prevention services and in need of more effective strategies to facilitate behavior change in core populations at risk. The objective of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of behavioral counseling courses for sexual risk reduction through training individuals in behavioral counseling and intervention strategies based on formal behavioral theory and models, including the Transtheoretical Model of Change. Target audiences for these training courses included counselors, nurses, health educators, outreach workers, and managers, and others who provide STD/HIV interventions to facilitate behavior change in at-risk populations.

**METHODS:** Assessment tools were developed and given to all participants following delivery of the courses to evaluate how well the training met participants expectations, and for evaluating changes in knowledge and skills. A followup survey was sent to a sample of individuals to evaluate retention and use of behavioral counseling approaches.

**RESULTS:** Ninety percent of the participants in the Comprehensive Course felt they learned a substantial or moderate amount of new information. Average behavioral counseling skills increased 17%, compared to a 9% increase for general counseling skills. Six to twentyfour months following training, over 90% of participants said that as a result of their participation in the PTC training they began using and/or adjusted their approach to behavioral counseling.

**CONCLUSIONS:** We suggest that comprehensive training of professionals in clinic or community-based STD/HIV prevention training settings will have wide spread implications for primary prevention STDs and HIV, based the theory of diffusion of novel intervention.

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